



# Cash injection to help rough sleepers find a home

By Janet Maitland

**Barnet Council has been given £637,000 to help reduce the number of people having to sleep on the streets of the borough.**

The funding is from the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government who are targeting local authority areas with high numbers of rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough. Barnet is 15th in the top 30 Local Authorities in England in terms of the number of people who are homeless.

## Help provided in Barnet

The money will go to the Rough Sleepers Project, set up by Barnet Homes a year ago with £220,000 from the same government fund. To date, the project team has provided 98 rough sleepers with temporary emergency accommodation,

and helped 26 into longer term accommodation.

“We set out at 5.30am to find people sleeping rough and offer them services and support to find routes away from the streets,” said a Barnet Homes spokesperson. “Once we’ve placed people in temporary accommodation, we link them to health, mental health, benefits and longer term accommodation. If rough sleepers don’t want emergency accommodation, we continue to visit them and refer them to Homeless Action in Barnet where they can get daytime support.”

The extra funding will provide a short-term ‘safe place to stay hub’ for rough sleepers. A hostel in Friern Barnet Road is being refurbished to create the hub, planned to open in October.

## The wider picture

The housing charity Shelter estimates that 281,000 people in England were homeless in 2019, including 135,000 children without a home or living in temporary accommodation. The stock of council housing in England has fallen from five million homes in 1981 to 1.6 million in 2019. Of the almost £1.1 billion spent last year by councils in England on temporary accommodation for homeless households, 86 per cent went to private landlords, letting agents or companies.

If you are concerned about someone you have seen sleeping rough in London, go to [streetlink.org.uk](http://streetlink.org.uk) who will contact the local street outreach team. But if you think the person you are concerned about is under 18, ring the police.

# Boiler man seeks those at risk from asbestos

By David Melsome

**An East Finchley man who worked at a former psychiatric hospital is appealing for workers and patients to come forward and contribute to a register of those who could be at risk of developing asbestos-related disease.**

Mike O’Shea, a boiler man at Friern Hospital in Friern Barnet between 1987 and 1993, says he has seen former colleagues die from mesothelioma, an asbestos-related cancer and is concerned for his own wellbeing and the health of others who were on the premises in the same period.

Mike hopes a register will help others who find themselves facing mesothelioma, which can affect people up to 50 years following exposure to asbestos. Once described as the magic mineral, Mike recalls his own encounters with asbestos at the hospital vividly.

## Appalling conditions

Mike O’Shea said: “The conditions at the hospital were appalling from a health and safety perspective. Clumps of asbestos had fallen from pipework and torn asbestos lagging was visible everywhere in the boiler house.”

“Having seen former friends and colleagues die from contact with asbestos, I live in constant fear that I will succumb to the disease, which is why I am keen to produce this register to help all those who worked and were patients at the hospital.”

The giant psychiatric hospital which closed its doors in 1993 was one of the largest psychiatric hospitals in Europe, with up to 2,500 patients and known to have the longest corridor in England.

Ian Bailey, asbestos law partner at the London office of legal firm Irwin Mitchell, said: “Mike has already been generous enough to support the families of his former colleagues with asbestos diseases but his concern about his own health following from his own exposure is totally understandable and is a genuine worry that he has to live with.”

## Letters

### Keep calm and... look out for others

Dear Editor,

The situation with the rising number of people affected by the Coronavirus is a worrying one. Now is the time for us all to work together as a community to make sure we all pull through.

More than ever, we should find time to check on elderly neighbours who may be unable or too scared to go out to get food. A note through their door or a chat through their letterbox is all it takes.

And the local shops and businesses who may already be having a tough time will find it even harder if we all stay at home. As long as it is safe for us to do so, we should continue to shop locally around East Finchley and keep supporting our wonderful cafés and restaurants, and places like the Phoenix Cinema.

**Julie Warner,  
Kitchener Road, N2.**

### We’re in it together

Dear Editor,

In a very ironic way, I’d like to thank all those people who have in recent days stripped the shelves in Budgens, Iceland and Sainsburys of loo roll, other toiletries, milk, soup and other non-perishable foods, bread and frozen food.

Think of those more vulnerable than yourself, especially those who cannot shop online (where supplies are also limited) or buy in bulk. I have had to visit 12 shops before I could find any loo roll for an elderly relative. It is totally unacceptable, selfish behaviour and makes an already difficult time even more stressful. Thanks however to Budgens who are now rationing loo roll and offering deliveries for the over 65s and I’m sure many in the community will be helping others in the coming weeks and hopefully people will become less selfish in the shops. We are all in this together!

**Name and address supplied.**

### What’s in a name?

Dear Editor,

St. James’s Church in Muswell Hill (‘Raise the roof to save the roof’, *The Archer*, March 2020) lost its historical and grammatical spelling towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; a less than literate vicar had installed a new notice board with a new spelling.

Since then two variants have become common and have taken over, even spawning the bizarre new place name of St James Square, an area which is hardly square.

The historical and grammatically correct St. James’s spelling remains evident in the adjacent St James’s Lane name plates and on maps of the area. How can the status quo ante be restored?

**Peter Lack,**

**Address supplied.**

# How shopping sustainably is in fashion

One third of harmful microplastics in our oceans comes from washing clothes. On behalf of campaign group No2PlasticsN2, **Georgia Whitear** talks to **Aida Khaledi** at clothing boutique **Aliya J** about steps we can all take to live and shop more sustainably.

**Aida Khaledi opened Aliya J. in the High Road, N2, just over five years ago after a successful pop-up at the back of Rykers, a children’s clothes and shoe store which is now unfortunately closed. After working in fashion from the age of 16, and a brief break to look after her daughter, she was working for a designer when she decided to do it for herself.**

The Aliya J. website, named after her daughter, was set up and soon customers were asking to try on the clothes, which led to the first pop up. Now settled in her shop, she is making changes to adapt to a more ethically conscious customer.

## Focus on fabric

“I noticed that people from East Finchley cared more where the clothes had come from, they would always check the label,” said Aida. Much of the clothing she sells is ethically conscious, such as recycled polyester raincoats and the sustainable brand Thought. “I think about plastics a lot... I try to order natural fibres such as cotton and bamboo.”

While recycled polyester is a step in the right direction, the microplastics that come off during the wash enter the water supply and can be very



Kinder clothing: Aida Khaledi, right, with Georgia Whitear at Aliya J.

damaging. This effect can be offset with items such as a Guppy Friend, a bag used for washing clothes that catches all microplastics. Aida points out that it is an investment and, yes, some customers would be interested and she is considering stocking them.

## Make-overs

Her most recent move has been to welcome a seamstress every Friday who offers a repair service and upcycles old clothes, as well as making garments from any fabric you have stored away at home. It’s a service that has been spread

entirely by word of mouth and customers are happy making the sustainable decision to keep certain pieces in their lives for longer, rather than always buying new.

To get involved with No2 Plastics East Finchley email [Kate Robertson at kgrlondon@gmail.com](mailto:Kate.Robertson@kgrlondon@gmail.com)

Your local home care company

Call us now on **0300 124 5231** for your free assessment and get £100 off your 2<sup>nd</sup> invoice!



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